but the State was allowed to file a review petition in High Court, Mumbai and this matter is, therefore, still subjudice in the said High Court.

(c) No forest land has been sold off by the State Government to Sahara Group of Companies for commercial activity, therefore, the question of land price does not arise.

(d) Government of Maharashtra has not entered into any contract of agreement with Sahara Company for converting and selling of forest land for commercial and residential purpose. Therefore, the question of obtaining permission of Central Government does not arise.

(e) Does not arise.

Conservation of urban lakes

593. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some badly polluted urban lakes were identified way back in 1994 for conservation by Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a also a fact that most of these lakes are still polluted and stinking as nothing has been done to make them pollution free; and

(d) if so, what action Government propose to take to clean these lakes within a time frame?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV): (a) to (d) The Lake Conservation under National Lake Conservation Plan (NLCP) was taken up in May, 2001 with the approval of proposals for 3 lakes namely Powai, Ooty and Kodaikanal. Till date projects for conservation of 24 lakes have been approved after considering varius proposals by State Governments. The Tenth Plan outlay for NLCP is Rs. 220.00 crore.

Genetically modified seeds

594. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) threatened to launch agitation if the Centre do not ban transgenic hybrid varieties including Bt. Cotton in the country in view of their harmful effects on environment and people;

(b) if so, the views of Government on use of genetically modified seeds; and

(c) the action taken by Government to compensate farmers who incurred losses by opting Bt. Cotton?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Government is following a policy of case by case approval of transgenic crops. Bt. cotton is the only transgenic crop approved for commercial cultivation in India. The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) accorded conditional approval for commercial cultivation of three Bt. Cotton varieties namely MECH-12, MECH-162 and MECH-184 of M/s Mahyco Hybrid Seed Company Ltd. in April, 2002 for a period of three years. During Kharif 2002, some of the Bt. cotton fields were monitored by the Committees constituted by this Ministry. The Committees observations and discussion with farmers indicated that the performance of Bt. Cotton is satisfactory as compared to its non Bt. counterpart. However, the yield of cotton crop (both in Bt. and Non-Bt. Hybrid), has been severely affected due to severe drought conditions during Kharif 2002. In view of the varying agro climatic conditions it has been decided to assess the performance of during a period of three years.

Forest land for Distribution among tribals in Kerala

595. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have agreed to grant 25,000 acres of forest land for distribution among tribals in Kerala;